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| Department of Elementary and Secondary Education logo | *News from Commissioner Jeffrey C. Riley & the*  *MA Department of Elementary and Secondary Education* |

**On the Desktop – February 3, 2020**

**Guidance on Plans Required by the Student Opportunity Act**

Dear Superintendents, Charter School Leaders, and Assistant Superintendents,

Guidance and materials to support planning for the three-year, evidence-based plans required by the Student Opportunity Act (SOA) are attached to this email. The SOA-required reporting for charter schools will be incorporated into charter schools’ annual reports and will be due on August 1. Further guidance will be provided to charter schools soon.

**Submission of plans for districts:**

* We are providing the attached guidance and forms *for planning purposes only*. In March, we plan to send out an **electronic link to a web form that districts will use to submit their plans.**
* By statute, plans are due to DESE by 11:59 p.m. on Wednesday, April 1, 2020.

**Bifurcated approach and directions:**

The Commissioner has determined that plan requirements will be bifurcated based on the amount of new Chapter 70 funding a district is expected to receive (based on the FY21 proposal in the House 2 budget released by the governor on January 22, 2020).

1. Districts expected to receive **less than $1.5 million** in incremental Chapter 70 funds in FY21 should refer to the **"Short Form" guidance document and template. Short form districts will only complete the template referenced in the guidance materials. There is no supplemental budget file to submit for short form districts.**
2. Districts expected to receive **over $1.5 million** in incremental Chapter 70 funds in FY21 should refer to the **"Long Form" guidance document. Long form districts should also reference the attached Excel files for help completing the supplemental budget file required for long form districts.** Further explanation is in the long form guidance document.

**Contact and support:**

* The Department will hold two **webinars** this week. These will be recorded so that districts can access them even if they cannot join the live webinar.

Webinar 1: Short Form Districts

**Thursday, February 6**

**2:30-3:30 p.m.**

<https://zoom.us/j/9734372843>

Meeting ID: 973 437 2843

By phone: 16465588656,,9734372843#

Webinar 2: Long Form Districts

**Friday, February 7**

**2:30-3:30 p.m.**

<https://zoom.us/j/9734372843>

Meeting ID: 973 437 2843

By phone: 16465588656,,9734372843#

At any time, please email SOAplans@doe.mass.edu with your questions.We will create a running FAQ document based on your questions that will be [posted on the DESE website](http://www.doe.mass.edu/commissioner/spec-advisories/default.html) along with the other documents attached to this email.

In addition to these materials, DESE will release a **supplemental document with descriptions of 17 examples of evidence-based programs** that align to the program categories within the SOA. A list of these example programs is available in the attached guidance materials, but the supplemental document will provide further information and resources to help districts implement these programs well. **This document will be available later this week.**

Please see below for additional details regarding the attached documents.

Sincerely,

Jeffrey C. Riley

Commissioner

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Additional details regarding the attached documents:

***Short form districts (less than $1.5M in incremental Chapter 70 aid):***

* **Student Opportunity Plans - Short Form Guidance (PDF):**This guidance document contains information that districts completing the short form will need to create their plans. We recommend you read this document carefully. We expect that the following items will be especially helpful: the introductory letter from the commissioner, the introductory guidance pages, the list of the 17 evidence-based programs identified by DESE, the checklist for completing the short form, and the sample short form that provides a model for districts to review when completing their plans.
* **Short form districts do not need to consult any of the Excel files attached to this email; those are for long form districts only.**

***Long Form Districts (more than $1.5M in incremental Chapter 70 aid)***

* **Student Opportunity Plans - Long Form Guidance (PDF):**This guidance document contains information that districts completing the long form will need to create their plans. We recommend you read this document carefully. We expect that the following items will be especially helpful: the introductory letter from the commissioner, the introductory guidance pages, the list of the 17 evidence-based programs identified by DESE, the checklist for completing the long form, and the sample long form that provides a model for districts to review when completing their plans.
* **Sample Long Form SOA Programs Budget (Excel file)**:  A sample program budget for a fictitious district is provided that mirrors the sample narrative found in the guidance document.  Similar to the sample narrative, this document provides a model of the length and detail required in the final submission.
* **Long Form SOA Programs Budget File (Excel file)**: This is a blank budget document to be used by your district. If you need additional worksheets for other programs, copy the worksheet for as many programs as are needed. More details will follow as to how you will submit this budget by the April 1 deadline.
* **Recommended SOA Programs Budget - Chapter 70 (Excel file):**This spreadsheet for long form districts provides guidance on the minimum amount of incremental Chapter 70 aid districts should include in their budget file submissions. The long form guidance document contains more information for how to use this spreadsheet in district planning.

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